

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS YOUR GREATER LONDON MUSIC PAPER

FREE PULL-OUT GUIDE TO THE BEST OF THE GIGS

FREE EVERY WEEK WITH NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS IN LONDON AND THE SOUTH-EAST THIS ISSUE WEEK ENDED JANUARY 1, 1972

AROUND LONDON

GOOD TIME GUIDE TO LONDON/SOUTH EAST



Still not a great many gigs in London and the South East this week, although WISHBONE ASH at the MARQUEE on New Year's Eve provide a chance to see one of our most talented new bands. GROUNDHOGS, GYPSY, AUDIENCE and the new KEEF HARTLEY BAND are among the other bands on the road. See features on all of them inside.

EDITED BY NICK LOGAN



ANDY POWELL and drummer STEVE UPTON of WISHBONE ASH.

WISHBONE SMASH

The club band of '71

AT the end of 1971, Wishbone Ash rightly stand strong and proud. From being just another up-and-coming club band twelve months ago, they've now established themselves as one of the most exciting live bands in the country, perhaps THE club band of 1971.

Sure, much of their success stems from sheer hard work. As Andy Powell says a little bitterly:

"A lot of people think we've made it by shoving our face in every club and ballroom in the country."

But that, by no stretch of the imagination, tells the whole story.

Of more importance is the group's ability to work as a team, a tight rocking unit. There are few solos. Each individual plays for the group rather than themselves or their egos. The result is music to move to, pure, high, rock.

Probably of the four—Ted Turner (guitar), Andy Powell (guitar), Steve Upton (drums) and Martin Turner (bass)—it's Powell who comes over as the most flamboyant character on stage.

Last week, after a heavy day's rehearsals, he took time off to talk at length to Around London. See Page L4/5.

INSIDE: ANDY POWELL
TALKS TO JAMES JOHNSON

MARQUEE,
FRIDAY

Q: I understand Wishbone were rehearsing earlier today. Was this for anything in particular?

A: Not specifically. Simply, it's been the first time in 18 months that we've had time to rehearse or write any material. We were beginning to get out of the habit.

Does this mean you'll have some new numbers shortly?

Yes, at last. (Smiling). In the London area there are lots of people who've come to see us time and time again, and I think it's about time we gave those people something new. The numbers we've written so far are basically rock numbers, difficult to describe in words. We may have one or two ready for the Marquee, though. We'll

slip them in on an unsuspecting audience.

In spite of the quiet numbers in the repertoire Wishbone Ash seems to be known principally as a fast rock band. Any comment?

Yeah I think we've definitely been put in the rock category. It's been good because it's given a kick up the pants. We've come to terms with the fact we're a rock band, whereas before we couldn't. We kinda meandered around. And I think our next aim will establish us even further in the rock category.

But at one point the band said they wanted to be known as something more than just a rock band?

Yeah, that's true. It's a drag to be limited but it's also a drag to moulder about. I think the band can

turn its hand to most kinds of music in the broad rock field. But I think all audiences want to know where you stand.

Does this mean you'll be cutting down on the quieter numbers?

I think that's the way it'll go. Generally our music is becoming more and more rock influenced. We were tempted to dip into jazz a bit before. I think now we want to concentrate on a band sound without any virtuosos stuff. When we started, we were terribly enthusiastic and wanted to try everything. If we could do a number in nine-four time we'd do it. Now, we've realised that's not all there is to making music. The basic thing is to get a band sound. In some ways we're going backwards musically to achieve that. I think in the past we've sometimes tried to be too clever.

Apart from "Blind Eye" early on, the group have never released a single. Any reasons for this?

I think the main reason is we've never thought anything we've written would make particularly good singles material — something that is effective and can be contained in three minutes. But we've got nothing against them. It'd be good to bring one out if the right song comes along.

How do you feel about criticism of the band's vocals?

We've been very conscious of the vocals ourselves. Again, I think we've been a little too ambitious in the past by writing pieces that were too difficult to sing. Lately we've been writing simpler vocals on simpler harmony structures. Generally though, if we've got to learn to sing well — we'll do it. There's no

reason why we shouldn't. I think in the past we've become known more for the music and the instrumentation. Hopefully, in the future, we can prove our worth lyrically and vocally as well. Certainly we're trying.

There's very little soloing by members of the band. Is this a deliberate policy?

When the band started we used to do bass solos, drum solos, guitar freak outs — the whole bit. I think we've got past that now. We don't want to fall into the trap of having one person standing out front all the time. We want to play as a team.

Would you as a guitarist like to do more solo work?

Not really. I don't think I'm that good. It's expected, and accepted, from somebody like Eric Clapton but I

think it's a bit beyond me at the moment. I mean, I could do it, I'd probably enjoy it but it'd probably bore the pants off the audience. Three years ago I could have done it, but not now. I think a solo should lead somewhere... to be well thought out... have a high point and so on. Just to stand on stage and ramble on is pointless.

Do you have an overall concept for the band?

Basically, we want to be known for our own music. We want to work towards our own sound. As soon as one of our records comes on the radio, or on a record player, we want it to be instantly recognisable as Wishbone Ash. Also we want to be known as a unit. Not just a band of four relatively good musicians who happen to play together. The personalities in the band are very close

and this is so important — as important as the musical togetherness. I think if one person left the band we could never carry on because we kind of prop each other up. If anybody left we'd all go our separate ways.

About yourself, how did you first start playing guitar?

It was at the first year at grammar school when I was about 12. I got money from a paper round and started playing in local groups — the usual thing. I used to copy every Shadows record that came out and try and be Hank Marvin. After that I tried to copy everything going in the pop field. I've never been a person who was just "really into the blues, man" or "really into jazz." It's not quite the same now. I've got more of a sophisticated taste than I had two years ago.

Any particular influences?

Over the last couple of years I've been listening a lot to Django Reinhardt and tried to incorporate a lot of things from him in my style. Later on I used to listen a lot to Peter Green and Eric Clapton — copy riffs — that sort of thing. But I don't listen to them much now. Quite honestly I'm so

involved with the band I tend to let it govern my style more than anything else.

How would you rate yourself as a guitarist?

I think I could hold my own with most people on the rock scene, perhaps. The people I really admire are people like Pete Townsend, who isn't a particularly good guitarist but has a good concept of playing. He's got a recognisable style — all those beefy chords.

How would you describe the essential differences between yourself and Ted as guitarists?

I think Ted's more of a pure guitarist. Like, I often get carried away with things like speed, whereas Ted is more melodic. He'll think up notes and phrases which are so obvious yet so effective. He's taught me a lot like that. I tend to be an excitable guitarist whereas Ted lays back more. I think Ted and I have now got to the level of communication where we can sort of feed off each other. He's taught me an incredible amount. He's only been playing three years and I've been playing for about ten, yet he teaches me something every day. And I know he's learnt a lot off me.

What are your personal ambitions as a musician?

I've got no wish to be Britain's number one guitarist or anything like that. Simply, there are so many more people better than me. But I'd like to think I can make some sort of contribution to the rock scene. I'd like to be known for that one day. I still want to further myself, but maybe at the moment my ambitions are for the group.

As a musician do you ever feel restricted by Wishbone Ash?

Not at the stage we're at the moment. I think for all of us it takes up all our energies. And we're all learning so much from the collective resources. Ted's done a few sessions and I wouldn't mind doing some, but really it's a matter of finding the time.

It has been said Wishbone Ash are rather a "faceless" band in the sense that none of the individuals seem to stand out. Any comments?

I think it's true. In fact, the other day Steve, our drummer, was saying that most people seem to think of Wishbone Ash as four young lads up from the provinces who've come to town, formed a group and made good. There's no Mick Jagger or Rod Stewart up front. It's just happened like that.

Is it important, anyway?

Some people have said we've needed a front man, and I remember at one stage we were toying with the idea of getting a vocalist. But that was very early on and even then we realised it wouldn't have worked. Six months after we formed we were a firm unit. If it came to the point where somebody was pushed out front, we'd like to be known as the band with two guitarists — Ted and Andy. The point is we've got five times more strength together than either of us on our own.

ANDY POWELL INTERVIEW
BY JAMES JOHNSONWISHBONE: FOUR YOUNG LADS
UP FROM THE PROVINCES